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Essays, Expositions, &c.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL COULING.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."—Psalm xxiii. 1.

In ancient times the occupation of a shepherd was not of that menial character that it is in the present day. Hence some of the greatest men of antiquity have borne the pastoral character and followed the shepherd's calling. The names of Abel, Isaac, Jacob, Abraham and Moses will readily present themselves to the memory as cases in point. David, too, was taken from the sheep cote to be made king over Israel. At what period of his life the twenty-third Psalm was written there are no means of exactly determining. It was, however, probably written when he was far advanced in life and drawing near to the tomb. The ripe, rich experience portrayed in the psalm seems to indicate this. The psalmist is looking back upon all the way by whic hGod has led him, and in thankful remembrance of God's mercies and in full confidence in God's grace, he looks even with satisfaction to the "walk through the valley of the shadow of death," fearing "no evil" in the midst of it, but depending upon the "rod" and the "staff" of his great and good shepherd to "comfort" and support him.

Perhaps David, in taking a retrospective view of his life, had thought of one incident which occurred to him while keeping his flock of sheep at a time when he was alike "unknowing and unknown." David left his "few sheep in the wilderness," although not in the "pride and the naughtiness of his heart," as insinuated by his eldest brother Eliab, but with the sincere desire of doing good service to the people of the Lord by ridding them of their greatest enemy. And David said unto Saul, "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God." And while the recollection of this incident was passing through his mind, the thought would quickly flash across him—"'The Lord is my shepherd.' All

that I endeavoured to be to the flock committed to my care, God is to me. As I protected them so God will protect me. As I fed them so will God feed me. 'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.' Nay; God will be better to me than I was to my flock, for 'Surely goodness and mercy *shall* follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever'."

This first verse of the psalm furnishes the key-note to the whole. It states a most glorious fact and then draws from that fact a most consolatory conclusion.

"The Lord is my shepherd." That is the fact upon which the whole of the psalm hinges. And we can be at no loss in supposing that when David penned these words, he was looking by faith, down the long vista of ages, to the time when the Lord Jesus Christ, as "the good shepherd," should "lay down his life for the sheep." The two appellatives which the royal psalmist here uses sufficiently indicate to whom he referred when he said, "The Lord is my Shepherd." The term "Lord," sets before us Christ in his divine perfections, while the term "Shepherd," reveals him in his mediatorial character and office. And in the tenth chapter of John's gospel our Lord himself seems to apply this very passage to his own relationship with the church of God, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine—and I lay down my life for the sheep." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." But to save the sheep, and to secure for them all the blessings of this life and the life to come, it was necessary that the shepherd himself should die. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts. Smite the Shepherd." And therefore in laying down his life for the sheep, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." He laid down his life that we might have "eternal life." He "died the just for the unjust to bring us to God." He redeemed us from sin, death, and hell; and having given his life for us, he surely will not withhold the lesser gifts of his hand. Therefore with David may we say, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

"The Lord my pasture shall prepare,
And feed me with a shepherd's care;
His presence shall my wants supply,
And guard me with a watchful eye:
My noon-day walks he will attend,
And all my midnight hours defend."

And this is the conclusion which may be safely arrived at, if it is an ascertained fact that the Lord is *our* shepherd. The king of Israel would not say "I shall not want," until he could truly say "The Lord is *my* shepherd." Here then is the language of an appropriating faith: a faith which not only believes the promise but which also says, "my God is mine," even when all is dark and gloomy around, and there appears to be no promise to lay hold of. David does not say that the Lord is *a* shepherd, or *the* shepherd, but *my* shepherd, and *therefore*, "I shall not want." Not unfrequently did the psalmist and other inspired writers use a somewhat similar form of speech:—"The Lord is my portion; therefore will I hope in him;" "The Lord is my light and my salvation; therefore will I not fear." "This God is our God, for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death."

"The Lord my shepherd is,
I shall be well supplied;
Since he is mine, and I am his,
What can I want beside."

Storms of trouble may threaten and we shall want shelter; dangers may beset us and we shall want courage; poverty may overtake us and we shall

want food and raiment and habitation; sickness may come upon us and we shall need strength and comfort.

But "*The Lord* is my shepherd" and has everything at his command to bestow upon the sheep of his pasture. He is Lord of all worlds. Heaven and earth are at his disposal. "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's." And hence the psalmist might well say, "The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly."

If then Christ is mine and I am his, I may well conclude that "I shall not want." And whether this applies to temporal or to spiritual matters, it is still true, for Christ is the fountain from whence flows all the streams of truth and love and mercy. We shall not want pardon for our sins for he died to save; we shall not want a righteousness to cover us for his all-perfect robe of righteousness is to all and upon all who believe in him. He is the Lord our righteousness. Strength shall be ours for "He giveth power to the faint, and to those who have no might he increaseth strength." Comfort shall be ours for do we not read "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." If any of you lack wisdom it shall be yours for "He is made unto us Wisdom and Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption."

How precious is this word to the poor, the tried, and the afflicted. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" bread to eat. Poor and perhaps penniless I may be, but "the Lord will provide." "Thy bread shall be given thee and thy water shall be sure." "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Hence David declares that even in the presence of his enemies his shepherd had prepared a table for him, and so bountifully supplied all his necessities that he could say "My cup runneth over."

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" rest for either body or soul. Here we have plenty of care and anxiety; much to disturb and depress us, and many disquieting influences everywhere around. But there is rest for the weary in Christ. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Cast your burdens upon him then and he will sustain them. The Lord will bless his people with peace, and give his beloved sleep and all needful repose here, and then there "remaineth" still "a rest for the people of God."

And so the Lord being our shepherd we shall not want for divine guidance and direction. He himself will lead us "in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." Protecting mercy, supplying mercy, sustaining mercy, shall all be supplied for "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

"Lead on, dear shepherd! led by thee—
No evil shall I fear;
Soon shall I reach thy fold above,
And praise thee better there."

S. G.

Scarborough.

MOSES' PRAYER AND PAUL'S WISH.

BY T. W. MEDHURST, GLASGOW; AUTHOR OF "ROMANISM NOT CHRISTIANITY BUT A SATANIC DELUSION," ETC.

WHAT did Moses mean when he said to the Lord, "Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sins——; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written?" (Exod. xxxii. 32). Not certainly that God should blot his name out of the book of PREDESTINATION OF ETERNAL LIFE. This is certain from *God's answer*, v. 33, "And the Lord said unto Moses, whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book." Now, will God ever blot out the name of those who are written in the book of eternal life? Impossible. God is immutable. Man's sin can never alter God's purpose. God had said to Moses, v. 10, "Now, therefore, let me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great

nation." Here we see God threatens Israel that he will blot out their name, and cut them off from being a nation; and promises that instead of Israel He would make of Moses a great nation. The reply of Moses is to this effect—"Nay, Lord, I am so far from such an ambition to be made a great nation on condition that I let Thee alone, that Thy great wrath may cut off this whole people, that I would rather desire Thee to blot my name out of the writing of Israel, that my name may not stand in the record as the leader of Thy people, as I now am; rather let me not so much as be reckoned for an Israelite, than that Thy name should thus suffer." Moses would die with Israel, be cut off with the people, rather than live any longer, if God would execute the fierceness of his anger against them. This I take to be the sense of the passage.

In Ezek. xiii. 9, we read of "the writing of the house of Israel." God says concerning the lying prophets, "They shall not be in the assembly of My people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel." It is from this writing that Moses would rather his name should be blotted, than that God should not forgive His people, whom he had brought up out of Egypt. The Jews were wont to number their families, and record their names; and thus God commanded a record of Israel to be kept. Thus David prayed against his enemies, "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous" (Psalm lxix. 28). Certainly David never *would* or *could* have prayed that any should be blotted out of THE BOOK OF GOD'S PREDESTINATION TO ETERNAL LIFE.

This is also what I conceive to be the meaning of Paul's words—"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. ix. 3). Moses, and Paul, were both moved with the same spirit of zeal for the glory of God. And as Moses, so Paul, wished himself to be AN ANATHEMA from Christ, that is a person separated, or excommunicated from the society and communion of the faithful, and so no more to be remembered on earth amongst the saints. Paul, for the Israelites' sake, could wish that his name were blotted out of the church records, though he had been so great a planter and propagator of churches. Certainly, Paul, whose heart was so on flame with love to Christ, could not wish himself accursed from Christ, in the sense in which he speaks when he says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha," that is, "*accursed when the Lord cometh*" (1 Cor. xvi. 22). Besides the IMPOSSIBILITY of such a wish, in Paul and Moses AS MEN, there would have been GREAT SIN in such a wish. But to wish, if that would benefit the Israelites, who were his kinsmen according to the flesh, to be the most contemptible amongst the Christians, even as those who were excommunicated from the church of Christ, which is sometimes called Christ (1 Cor. xii. 12), is no sin: for "there is no limit to the sacrifice which one man may make for the benefit of others, except that which his duty to God supposes." Neither Moses, nor Paul, prayed for anything contrary to God's will, nor for what would have been absolutely and determinately contrary to their own salvation. As Dr. Charles Hodge well asks, "If it is wrong to do evil that good may come, how can it be right to wish to BE evil that good may come?" "We must be willing to give up our houses and lands, parents and brethren, and our life also, for Christ and his kingdom; but we are never required to give up HOLINESS for his sake, for this would be a contradiction." Master John Trapp says, "Paul's love to the church was like the ivy, which if it cleave to a stone or an old wall, will rather die than forsake it. Somewhat like to this holy wish was that of Ambrose, that the fire of contention kindled in the churches might (if it were the will of God) be quenched with his blood. And that of Nazianzen that (Jonah like) he might be cast into the sea, so by it all might be calm in the public." May so like holy love to the souls of men consume both writer and reader, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

THE USEFUL PREACHER.—No. 2. "THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE."

1 TIMOTHY i. 18.

SERMONS BY THE LATE REV. B. LEWIS, MERTHYR TYDFIL.

THE sole authority in all religious questions is the word of God. According to the Scriptures all Christians are soldiers fighting for the lawful rights of Jesus Christ their king. In the church militant we are soldiers; in the church triumphant conquerors. And more, in all probability the Christian life will continue to be a warfare until time shall be no more. Because in proportion as Christians are striving after holiness and perfection of character, they will be opposed by Satan and the world. Hence our Saviour said, that through much tribulation his disciples are to enter into life. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force, that is, by a hard struggle. Perceiving that we must fight we advice you brethren to ponder the contents of these words—War a good warfare; fight with credit to your king and country; defend your rights with intrepid courage.

THE NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE. If you are to be good soldiers you must understand your work. Tremendous have been the results of the strife of nature in every age. But as Christians we are engaged in a far more important conflict. The warfares of this world are strictly prohibited; they are in fact unlawful. Ours is not so. With all *their* noise and boastings, their enemies and victories are very insignificant when compared with those of the church of God.

We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities, with devils of the blackest hue. We are all soldiers if we are Christians. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God for the pulling down of strong-holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Paul was a very good soldier—listen to his words at the close of his earthly career, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." These were some of his words at the end of his struggles. The fact that all Christians are soldiers fighting under the banner of Christ pre-supposes a wonderful change in *mind*, *character*, and *work*. Once faithful and active subjects in the kingdom of darkness, waging a determinate war against God. (What madness.) Happily not so now. We have been translated into another kingdom altogether. Our captain Jesus Christ wishes to recruit the army. Orders have been issued. The command is gone forth "Follow thou me." Christ expects every man to do his duty. We are not all officers, but we are all soldiers—colporteurs and evangelists—distributors of tracts—all soldiers. Up to duty brethren, the victory is ours. If it tarry wait for it.

This warfare *implies numerous foes*. Remember that these foes are both internal and external. The propensities of a depraved and a polluted heart, which is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. The evil tendencies of the heart are restrained by Divine grace, notwithstanding their constant struggles to break loose and usurp the sole authority in the soul. A new government has been formed in the heart, but the old tories are still opposing it. Hence Christians are often called to fight against the lust which wars in their members.

These internal foes are much more dangerous than the external ones. The hard work of self-denial must be accomplished before these are subdued. It is a continual struggle Christ against Satan. That's enough for him—holiness against sin—light against darkness—and heaven against hell.

"Darkness struggles with light
Till perfect day arise;
Water and fire maintain the fight
Until the weaker dies.

"Thus will the flesh and spirit strive,
And vex and break my peace,
Till I shall quit this mortal life,
And sin for ever cease.

Look again at the *external enemies*—malice, hatred, petty jealousies.—The continual striving for the mastery. Who shall be the greatest this or that man? I shall do my best to obliterate his influence—blot out from society his good Christian deeds—"his foolish notions." This war has been carried on now for the period of more than 6000 years, and no sign of peace yet! The principalities and powers of darkness are making rapid strides still on the field, overthrowing good purposes, crushing home and foreign missionary efforts. I am glad that they are so mad against us. Brethren, stand in your ranks, be faithful, if you see death coming to face you, "Be faithful until death."

THE CHARACTER OF THIS SPIRITUAL WARFARE—GOOD.—*Because it aims at the destruction of evil.* If we could destroy evil we should have a very *quiet* world. We have the same purpose exactly as Christ himself had in coming to dwell amongst us. We fight for the rights of God and men. What a noble warfare! It is an honour to be engaged in such a conflict. If the armies of different nations look with pride upon their aims on the battle-field, surely we can.

Good.—Because *no life has been lost in our engagements.* The soldiers of Jesus are immortal. No fiery darts can deprive them of their life because it is hid in Christ.

Our weapons are also good. They are indestructible. The word of the Lord endureth for ever—the sword of the spirit. Read the history of our conquests in different lands and also on the sea. We have the best *protection* in our conflicts. The Lord is our shield.

We have the best commander. It is important for an army to have a skilful and heroic leader. One thoroughly acquainted with the tactics of the enemy. Think of the qualifications of Christ in this respect.

Good—Because the victory is ours. Having these advantages we pronounce the warfare good. Carry it on in the spirit of the Great Commander. His name is above every name—look upon him—fight in his spirit—refuse not the least of his commands and the victory is yours. The walls of Babylon and every other citadel must fall. The angel stands ready to proclaim that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ. These are not dreams or illusions, but facts that must have a practical form some day. "Amen so let it be."

JOTTINGS OF THOUGHTS ON THE "PILGRIM'S PROGRESS."

SCENE VI.

THE *gate* into which Christian had entered, is approached by many and different paths. These lead from various conditions of life, as Heathenism, Infidelity, Immorality, and Self-righteousness. And constantly upon these roads is to be seen "here and there a traveller," wending his way, with weary steps to Jesus Christ—"The wicket gate." That gate once entered, there is henceforth but one road, which is narrow, straight, and rough. Hence says the excellent "Goodwill," on his parting with his pilgrim; "Well, good Christian, come a little way with me, and I will teach thee about the way which thou must go. Look before thee; dost thou see this narrow way? That is the way which thou must go. It was cast up by the Patriarchs, Prophets, Christ, and his Apostles; and it is as straight as a rule can make it." "Then Christian began to gird up his loins, and to address himself to his journey. So the other told him, that by that he was gone some distance from the gate, he would come to the house of the Interpreter; at whose door he should knock; and he would shew him excellent things."

The house of the Interpreter is the sixth scene which the pencil of Bunyan's mighty genius so artistically and beautifully describes. To our mind it is one

of the finest parts of his immortal allegory. It is not so much a scene, as scenes within a scene. The views are every now and then dissolving, and picture after picture is presented.

I. Before giving what we deem to be the spiritual import of this part of the Pilgrim's Progress, let us notice the things which good Christian saw. Having entered the house, Mr. Interpreter said to him, "I will show thee that which will be profitable to thee." So he commanded his man to light the candle, and bid Christian to follow him. A beautiful portrait, hanging against the wall was the first object which caught the eye of the pilgrim. This, as we have heretofore remarked, represents a faithful minister of the gospel. It was shown first that Christian might know the kind of guide on whom he could rely.

The Dusty Parlour is a scene full of deep instruction. *The parlour itself*, as Bunyan tells us, represents the heart of man by nature; *the dust*, the sins and infirmities which collect from time to time upon that heart; *the brush* that was used, the holy and perfect law of God, which when applied by the Spirit, disturbs our corruptions, so that they arise in clouds and threaten to choke our souls; and *the damsel, with the water for sprinkling the floor*, the office and services of the gospel. Such is the interpretation which the great dreamer himself gives of this scene.

The two characters—*Passion and Patience*—seen in a little room (a misnomer) seem to comprehend the whole of human kind, since the world's population is divided into two parts, those who live by sense, and for time; and those who live by faith, and for eternity. At present Passion is a child of larger growth than Patience; he is older and seems to have thrived better. When will the time come when the first shall be last, and the last, first?

The scene of *the fire burning against the wall*, and burning notwithstanding the most vigilant efforts to put it out, is expressive of a glorious doctrine as merciful as it is true. Strong is Satan, but omnipotent is Immanuel; powerful are the workings of human corruptions, but the oil of divine grace will yet prevail, and finally extinguish the fire which hell has kindled, and seeks to keep alive. Well may the Christian, in view of the sovereignty of divine love, take down his harp, which too often hangs upon the willow, and as he tunes it anew to raise melodious chords in such words as these:—

> "Grace will complete what grace begins,
> To save from sorrows and from sins;
> The work that wisdom undertakes,
> Eternal mercy ne'er forsakes."

The Stately Palace, called Beautiful, with those upon the top, clothed in garments of gold, at first delighted Christian greatly, but afterwards, when he saw the entrance was guarded by armed warriors, he became amazed, if not alarmed. So true is it—"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." We must put on the whole armour of God, if we would wear the conqueror's robes. We must use the sword of the spirit, if hereafter we would wave the palm-branch of victory. We must suffer, if we would reign; carry the cross, if we would be enthroned; wear a crown of thorns, if we would wear a crown of glory; in a word, be willing to endure all manner of obloquy and contumely, if at heaven's gate we would hear the commendation —"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The Man in the Iron Cage contains an awful warning to those who trifle with religious convictions. There are many professors, we fear, whose experience is so graphically depicted here. They are those who have failed to watch, who have neglected to pray, who have lived in known sins, who have resisted the admonitions of conscience, who have grieved the spirit of God, who have tempted the Wicked One, and provoked the anger of the Most High. And now their wilfulness, their perfidy, their apostacy, are as ghosts which haunt them day and night, or as iron bars, which imprison their troubled souls. How awful is the situation of an apostate! Let me be poor, let me be diseased, let

me be imprisoned, let me be led to the stake, if such be the will of God; but let me never for a moment trifle with my religious convictions and profession. To act thus, is to produce a worm in the soul that will always gnaw; to make a day which will be the image of night; and to raise a storm in the conscience, where every advancing wave will throw our bark upon her beam-end, and at last hurl her upon the rocky shore of eternal perdition!

The last scene which Christian saw was a man troubled by a *Dream of the Last Judgment*. And no marvel that he was troubled, as many besides him have been, for the dream will turn out a tremendous reality. The same decree which has fixed our death, has fixed a future judgment, and as we cannot avoid the one, so neither shall we be able to escape the other. If, then, we are unreconciled to God, unjustified through unbelief, and die in this state, we shall find it "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." A human court is solemn enough, especially when life and death are pending the issue of the trial. But what must the assize of heaven be, when naked spirits shall stand at the bar of God, and the verdict and sentence announced shall be irreversible and eternal?

"Oh to be ready, ready, for that day,
Who would not throw earth's fairest toys away."

II. Such were the things which good Christian saw in the house of the Interpreter. What, however, some may ask, is meant by this house and Him who exhibited and explained these things? "It is," as one remarks, "the treasure-house of experience, where are stored up all God's provisions, and providences, and dealings with men. Out of this storehouse the spirit bestows, according to our wants, our asking, and our use of supplies already given—'grace for grace.' It is the house of call to all true pilgrims to Zion above, where the hungry may obtain bread, the thirsty water, and the weary rest." No doubt the scene is meant to denote a state of grace, which all obtain who are in Christ Jesus, and the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Till we are united to the Saviour, those teachings are not received, and hence man remains in ignorance of the essential verities of the gospel. The carnal mind is ignorant of God, and the things of God. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the knowledge of the glory of God should shine unto them." But say the apostles Paul and John—"We have the mind of Christ."—"Ye have received an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." It is the prerogative of the Spirit to take the things of Christ, and reveal them unto the souls of those who believe. Hence says the Redeemer to his immediate disciples—"When He, the spirit of truth, is come, He shall teach you all things." How remarkably was this prediction fulfilled in the experience of these his chosen ambassadors. Though with their master from day to day, and listening to his popular and matchless discourses, yet were they grossly ignorant of the spiritual import of his teaching. The kingdom of which their master so often spoke, was always interpreted by them as an *earthly* kingdom—the land of Palestine with its adjacent countries, now held by the Romans, and its subjects, the Jewish people. Nor was this false impression removed by the death of Christ, for even after his resurrection from the dead, "When they were come together they asked him, saying—Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" No, it was not until the day of Pentecost, when the spirit descended in the form of cloven tongues, and they were baptised with true Christian intelligence, that they really understood the kingdom of God, and the genius of Christianity. Hitherto they were as babes, and manifestly ignorant of the alphabet of the Christian religion. Now they speak and act like men well instructed in Christian theology.

The great lesson which Bunyan would have his readers learn from the scene before us—"the house of the Interpreter," is this:—If we would be wise in the knowledge of divine things, we must first believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and then take the Holy Spirit, his representative, to be our constant teacher. This done by fervent prayer, things obscure will become plain; things simple will become sublime; things which have hitherto been despised will assume vast proportions, be clothed with the highest beauties, and spread themselves out to an ocean, a vast sea of glory. How well at all times to come to the sacred Scriptures in the spirit of Milton, who, as he sat down to write his immortal poem, thus breathed forth his prayer to heaven:—

"And chiefly Thou, O spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st;
. . . . . .
What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low, raise and support;
That to the hight of this great argument,
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men."

Crewkerne. S. P.

(To be continued.)

THE BIBLE THE WORKING MAN'S FRIEND.

As I shall put the remarks that I intend to make into the shape of an address rather than a sermon, I shall not give a passage of Scripture as a text. The topic for our consideration is "The Bible the Working Man's Friend." By the Bible, of course will be understood the common version of God's word given us in the English tongue; and by the working man, I mean, specially, any man who honourably earns his bread, and the bread of his dependents, in the sweat of his brow.

That the working man ought to have friends is unquestionable. To the working man we are all, from the Queen upon the throne down to the humblest subject in the realm, indebted. Without his skill and toil we should not be in the possession of ten thousand comforts which unite to make this life pleasant and happy. We cannot move about our houses, pass through our streets, or even sleep in our beds, without being in some measure indebted to his labour. We may then exclaim with the poet:—

"God bless the noble working men,
Who rear the cities of the plain;
Who dig the mines, who build the ships,
And drive the commerce of the main.
God bless them, for their toiling hands
Have wrought the glory of all lands."

The working man then ought to have friends. But first of all *he ought to be his own friend.* No argument is needed to prove this. But you may ask, is he not his own friend? My answer is—not always. I know some who are apt to clamour loudly against those who are not professedly the friends of the working man, while at the same time they are not after all their own friends. Now your true friends can only help you in two ways: first by doing good to your bodies, and secondly by doing good to your souls. But all working men are not there own friends in these respects. Many of them instead of doing good to their bodies, are gradually destroying them by intemperance, and by licentious lives are daily sowing within them the seeds of disease, premature decay, and death. Are these their own friends? And how many are there who have no thought about their souls? They seek not their own mental improvement either in relation to this life or the life that is to come. It is not often indeed,

that they think they have immortal souls destined to live eternally either in happiness or woe. Are these their own friends? When a man of this class comes to ruin how often do people say, "Ah! poor fellow he was his own enemy!" There are indeed, too many who are not only their own enemies, but other people's too; and it is almost impossible to be one's own enemy without at the same time being other people's as well. Now, dear friends, before you grumble about others in higher life not being your friends, ask yourselves the question—"Am I my own friend? Am I doing all that I can to benefit my own body and soul?" Depend upon it that unless you seek to be your own friends in this way, friends outside can do you little service. What I want to see is every working man becoming his own friend, then I know that he will soon get other friends.

Granted, then, that the working man ought to be his own friend, and that all of us ought to be his friend, I advance a step further and say, that the Bible, if it is what it professes to be, ought to be his friend. What is the Bible? A revelation from God to man. Who form the majority of men? Working men. Then the Bible is specially a revelation to that class. A revelation to man must be in a special sense a revelation to a class forming the majority of men. I expect then, as I open the Bible, that I shall find in it full proof that it is the working man's friend, by recognising him, by asserting the dignity of labour, and by pointing out to him his best and highest interests. Doth the Bible do so? Let us see.

I open the Bible as an enquirer, and what do I find? I find that its first chapter represents the most high God at work. It speaks of the greatest of all beings as not seated upon a lofty throne in frozen state, delegating work to inferior intelligences, and issuing austere commands while he himself will not stir or put a finger to the work; but it sets him forth as the creator and maker of the vast universe, as the author of light, of the firmament, of the earth, the stars, inferior creatures, and man. The first chapter then, represents God *working*. He is not too high to stoop to work. He is set before us as the eternal worker. Jesus said to the Jews, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." God then is at the head of all workers. His eye never closes in sleep; his arm is never inactive; his frame is never weary; he sets to the universe the example of untiring industry. What a glorious head for working men to look up to! Where is the working man who will not boast of such a head? If the soldier will boast of his general; if the political aspirant will boast of his leading statesman; let the working man make his boast that the head of the working race in the universe is God.

I read on and I find that the Bible represents our first parents as being made for work. When the Lord made Adam and put him into the garden of Eden, it is said that the Lord put him into that garden "to dress it and to keep it." Now some persons have a notion that the fall brought in work. But this is a mistake. It brought in the curse with work, but work itself was previously ordained. God knew well that a life of idleness would be a curse even in Paradise, therefore he ordained work and kept the curse out. These persons looking upon heaven as being typified by this garden, think if they get to heaven they will be free from work. Let them, however, bear in mind, that Adam was set to work in this garden, and if that was a type of heaven,—arguing by analogy—there will be work in heaven. And why should there not be? Is a life of eternal laziness so desirable? If it is a body and soul destroying vice here, it is only reasonable to suppose that it would be so there, and therefore we ask not for it. We rejoice to know that it is said of the redeemed in heaven that there they are to "serve God," and service is work. Our first parents then were workers; and all of us—the highest of the aristocracy included, must trace our pedigree back to a gardener and his wife. Then another fact worth bearing in mind is that the Bible's greatest heroes were of humble descent—were working men. The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all shepherds. Moses was a shepherd: Gideon a thrasher of wheat;

David a shepherd boy; Elijah a cattle keeper; Elisha a ploughman; and Amos a herdsman. The apostles too, were mainly fishermen. But the greatest hero of all—Christ Jesus the Son of the Highest—he became the carpenter's reputed Son, and evidently worked at the Carpenter's trade, for men said, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" Yea more than that "Is not this the carpenter?" Never did God crown labour with more dignity than when he chose this humble useful occupation for his Son. Jesus knew what it was to work in the sweat of his brow, and to work too till he was faint and weary. Many a weary night might he have sat up in toiling to make ploughs, and tables, and other articles for the rough Nazarenes. I like this thought because it shows me that Jesus belonged to the working race, and that he can therefore by experience sympathise with their struggles. I do not wonder at the enthusiasm of the poor Frenchman when he thought of it. In the reign of terror in France, a French workman was guillotined, and when he reached the scaffold he made a boast. And what was it? Why, on the scaffold he boasted that the *sans-culotte*—Jesus Christ belonged to the same fraternity as himself—the working man's fraternity. As Mr. Blackie says "The excited and half frantic democrat had caught a distorted glimpse of the great truth which in its clearness and beauty can never be far from the views of the Christian workman, that the King of Glory, when he came to earth to suffer for his sins, did at the same time as a brother labourer share his burdens and endure his toils." Working man this should lead thee to trust and glory in the Saviour. This then is enough to show that the Bible crowns the working class with honour, and sets forth through the noblest examples the dignity of labour.

But the Bible also gives the working man certain *privileges*, and bravely defends his *rights*. For instance, what a privilege to the working man is the Sabbath Day—the day of rest in seven. Do you not working friends, when weary and unwell, long for its coming? O! the blessed Sabbath Day! It is a boon to the aristocratic for they cast aside the cares of state. It is a boon to the rich, for, for a time they are relieved of their great responsibilities. But specially is it a boon to the working man. What would England be without her Sabbaths? Where, working men, would you be if you had no day of rest, or of worship to look forward to, except that which might be taken by force, or grudgingly given by mercenary employers; would you like it? I know you would not; you know that the Sabbath is one of the greatest boons conferred upon you as a class. And to what do you owe this day of rest? To the Bible, and to it only. It is that blessed book that sets forth how it was given to universal man at the creation; how it was incorporated in the moral laws; and how it was further sanctified by Christ rising from the dead. To that book you are indebted for all the pleasant Sabbaths you have spent. Reject the Bible—look upon it as your enemy—then your Sabbaths cease. As a certain writer has well said, "If God had not stopped the wheels of labour for them on one day of seven, working men would have had very hard work in getting them stopped for themselves." If working men in certain cases, find it hard to get them stopped when they are rolling round at the rate of fourteen hours per day, to bring them down to ten, they would find without an authoritative divine revelation, that it would be harder still to stop them one day in seven. Secularise the Sabbath and you will soon have a Sunday's labour instead of a Sunday's rest. No working man should ever speak a word against the Bible when it has given him a day of rest in seven.

Then what a privilege is *liberty*. We look upon those as being the friends of the human race who love civil and religious liberty. We hate slavery and oppression and wrong. We would have all enjoy the blessings of freedom. Now it is to the Bible we owe the liberty we enjoy as a nation. With the exception of America no nation can compare with us in the enjoyment of the boon of a nation's liberty. But how is this? It is to be attributed to the fact that the Bible lays the foundation of liberty by asserting the unity of the human race. It tells us that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men

for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Here alone is the true foundation of human liberty. Let it be proved that one portion of the human race sprung from one stock, and another portion from a more degraded stock, and a blow is struck at the foundation itself of human liberty, and we must cease to proclaim that all men are brethren. But this is not all, for this conceded, no logical argument can be shown why as in the brute creation, the stronger should not govern the weak, why might should not be right. Then see how the Bible defends the *oppressed*. In the strongest language that can be used it denounces the oppressor; and by glorious illustrations shows how God has again and again defended the weak against the oppression of the strong. Where can there be found stronger denunciatory language against the oppressor than that used in the fifty eighth chapter of Isaiah. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him: and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh." It is a fact that wherever the Bible goes, and is allowed to be read and freely circulated, people get trained to a love of liberty, battle for it and obtain it. In countries where the Bible is proscribed the people groan under oppression. But the men who fought for our liberties and gained them, were men of the Bible. The martyrs' blood was the seed of England's liberty. In the dungeon, on the scaffold, and at the stake, not to speak of the work done on the battlefield by Oliver Cromwell and his brave Ironsides, our civil and religious liberties were fairly earned and won, and may the glorious time come when all nations shall possess them as their lawful heritage.

The Bible defends the working man's rights. I will speak of one—the question of wages. It advocates the doctrine that every working man ought to have a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. It has no sympathy whatever with those who grind the poor. I remember a working man once saying to me, "I should like, Mr. Watts, to hear you expound in our place the epistle of James." He knew very well what there was in that epistle. He knew that in that epistle these words were written against the dishonest rich—"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." Whether that working man was right or wrong in applying that passage to some who went to "his place," I cannot say; but he certainly gave the Bible the credit by appealing to this epistle, for enjoining on all employers the duty of giving to the working man "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work."

Then the Bible inculcates the doing of everything that can make men physically and socially happy. It enjoins that whatsoever things are pure, honest, just, lovely, and of good report should be carried out. It inculcates the duty of charity, and sets forth the idolatry of covetousness; and it is to exhortations like these that we owe the erection of our infirmaries, hospitals, and various benevolent institutions, for they do not exist to any noteworthy extent where the Bible is unknown.

Lastly, dear friends, in the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord, the Bible sets the working man on the same platform as the rich man, yea, the poor specially are said to be chosen. No man can say, "My position gives me a greater right to come to Jesus than yours." It sets forth that the monarch must be saved in the same way as the labourer: that in this respect God is no respecter of persons. There is no room for pride here. In heaven the toiling servant shall be on a level with the saved king. Then working men look not

upon the Bible as an enemy, but rather as a friend sent to you by God. Make it practically your friend and daily councillor; then you will find that it will cheer you amid life's toils, comfort you in all its tribulations, guide you aright through all its difficulties, give you peace in a dying hour, and support you with its promises as you launch into eternity.

Stanningley. H. W.

Fragments and Choice Sayings.

SINS LINKED TOGETHER.

One sin draws after itself many more. Joseph's brethren envied him; that was a great sin; they then stripped him of his beautiful coat, and cast him into a pit; another sin; then they sold him to the Ishmaelites; still another; then, to hide these sins, they must add an act of falsehood and cruel deception; they dipped Joseph's coat in the blood of a kid, and carried it to their father, pretending that they had found it in the field. At the sight of it, Jacob's heart died within him. "An evil beast," said he, "hath devoured him: Joseph is, without doubt, rent in pieces." Now they must try to comfort him, and in so doing, they were obliged to play the hypocrite. Then they must persist in their falsehood and deception during all the long years—at least twenty-two—that passed until Joseph made himself known to them in Egypt. What a chain of dreadful sins! Yes, what a *chain*, for all these wicked deeds are linked together. The first drew after it all the rest. So, Herod first did an unlawful deed in marrying Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; then, when John reproved him for this sin, he "added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison." The first sin led to the second. But that was not the end. This same Herodias, whom he had unlawfully married, what did she do? When her daughter Salome danced before Herod and his lords, he was greatly delighted, and promised, with an oath, to give her whatsoever she would ask. This was both foolish and wicked. And now you see how these two sins, that of marrying Herodias, and that of making this oath to Salome, her daughter, united in producing another dreadful deed. At the mother's suggestion, who hated John for his faithfulness in reproving Herod, the daughter asked for the head of John the Baptist, and for "the oath's sake," Herod sent and beheaded John in prison.

BAPTIST PRINCIPLES.

It is really cheering and inspiring to read such tributes to Baptist principles as the following, from the pen of the distinguished Moderator of the British Congregational Union—Dr. Brown. In a recent address before that body, the eminent Doctor said; "The prominence given by Baptists to the *personality* of the Christian character and profession, becomes a valuable force arrayed on the side of Scriptural Evangelism against human traditions. It is the direct antidote and antagonist to that official virtue and authority upon which the Church of Rome has based the grand apostacy, and from which neither the Church of England, or even the Church of Luther, nor any other man-made church, has purged or will purge itself." The good Doctor then refers to the same principle in accounting for the great Reformation in Germany. He then adds: "In like manner, it may be expected that in proportion as the sentiments come into contact with the rank and rampant Popery of Ireland, and other scarce less Popish influences in England, the labours of the Baptist Irish and Home Mission Societies will tend to precipitate the final battle one day to be fought between the phalanxed forces of truth and error." This is the testimony of one who, though differing from us, yet comprehends both the principles by which we stand, and their unmistakable mission.

Poetry.

LYRICS FOR THE HEART.

BY W. POOLE BALFERN.

"And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town."—Mark viii. 23.

LORD, I am blind and cannot see my way,
I am a child, O take me by the hand!
From Thy sweet presence never let me stray,
But upwards lead me to the better land.

My way seems darker, feebler too my sight,
Dark shadows haunt me, faces wild and fierce,
My wisdom's gone, I have no strength or might,
Hell struggle's hard my little faith to pierce.

I would not move a step without thee Lord,
My foes are many, oft with fear I start;
Be thou my shield, my buckler, and my sword,
Pierce Thou hell's lion, quench each fiery dart.

I do not care to see the way I go,
If Thou, O Lord, wilt deign to be my guide;
Whether the path may lead through joy or woe,
All will be well if Thou art by my side.

In this unfaltering faith I place my hand
In Thine; Thou blessed Lord! to Thee I flee,
Whatever storms may blow I yet shall stand,
Thou wilt not fail the soul that trusts in Thee.

MY MOTHER'S VOICE.

My mother, 'twas thine own dear voice
Made glad my infant days,
My manhood's powers I'd consecrate,
To celebrate thy praise.

Some write of deeds by heroes done,
On battle's crimsoned plains,
Whilst others twine the wreath around
The head where wisdom reigns.

But I would weave a nobler crown,
With the flowers that deck our earth,
And with it grace the peerless brow,
Of her, who gave me birth.

The voice that cheered my boyhood's hours,
And scattered childhood's fears,
Still sounds above life's raging storm,
Sweeter than angel's prayers.

That voice shall cheer my fainting heart,
Till life's stern conflict's o'er,
That voice shall greet my soul, when freed,
On the Elysian shore.

E. F. C.

Page for the Young.

THE LITTLE CROSSING-SWEEPER.

MARY was a little girl who swept a crossing in Broadway, the cleanest crossing you could find. More ladies crossed there than anywhere else, because it was so clean, and because they liked to drop a cent into Mary's hand, and see her sweet look and sunny smile, and hear her hearty "Thank you."

The little girl almost always had a sweet look and sunny smile, for her heart was almost always full of love and light. Even on cold and wet days, when every body else looked dark and gloomy, she was as bright and sunny as ever. A little sprinkle of rain, or a chilling air did not hurt her; she was used to them, and glad that she could earn money in all weather.

One morning on reaching her crossing, she found Maggie Malone there before her, sweeping away with all her might. Mary stood in amazement and trouble, just like the little wren when a great cuckoo is in its nest.

"This is my crossing, Maggie," said she.

"Who gave it to you? Did you buy it?" asked Maggie in an impudent way.

"Why, I've swept it as much as a year."

"That don't make it yours."

"It makes it mine to sweep, don't it?"

"No, indeed; and if you have had it a year, it's time for somebody else to have it."

The policeman came along and, being a friend to Mary, ordered Maggie to find another crossing. She was very angry, and made a wry face and shook her broom at Mary when the policeman did not see her.

This made Mary unhappy all day. The passers-by missed the light on her little face, and wondered what had put it out, and tried to kindle it again with smiles and pennies; but it could not be kindled from without. Mary was in trouble for fear she had done wrong. Had not Maggie as good a right to the crossing as she? and if not, ought she not to be generous to Maggie? She ought to treat her as she would herself be treated: she must love her as she loved herself, just as well.

All day she was troubled, and at night she humbly prayed to be forgiven for her selfishness. The next morning she said to her mother, "Perhaps I shan't bring you much money to-night, for I am going to change my crossing."

She went to the crossing where Maggie had been the day before, and having swept it very clean, stood leaning on her broom when Maggie came.

"You can have my crossing, Maggie, if you want it," said Mary.

"Can I?" returned Maggie, surprised. "Why, what makes you give it up?"

"I thought you ought to have your turn there."

"Well, I think I'll stay here; I don't want to take your place from you, said Maggie, a little moved by Mary's kindness: "but this is a poor place," she added, "I didn't get enough yesterday to pay for my broom wear;" so saying she started for Mary's crossing.

It was a very dark day; the wind was in the east, and people shivered and scowled and hurried within doors; but Mary's face in her new crossing, was bright and glowing, and some of the cross and gloomy wondered where her sunlight came from. They did not know the secret of having a little sun of love in her heart, and keeping the clouds of sin and selfishness away from it. But God had taught it to Mary. "He hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the wise."

"What makes you so happy out here in the cold and damp all day?" asked an old sad-hearted man, as he paused beside her and took out his purse. Mary blushed, and hung her head as she answered, "Because God loves me."

The sad-hearted man let fall a tear on the coin he laid in the child's hand, and went his way, pondering the heavenly lesson dropped from her young lips.

Her old friends missed her at the old place, and in their disappointment passed Maggie with neglect; and when they found their favourite, showed plainly, by gifts as well as words, that they were glad to find her; so that there never was a better day for her.

At night when she poured her earnings into her mother's hand, she laughed for joy.

"Why, you have more than ever, instead of less," said the mother.

"I know it. Isn't it good? Maggie said she couldn't earn broom-wear at her crossing, and I got more there than at mine. I can't tell how it was, but I wanted to do right by Maggie, and I'm glad I didn't lose by it."

Blessed be God, that in his service there is great reward always, even for little ones, even for the least.

Reviews.

The Works of George Swinnock, M.A. Vol II. Containing, The Christian Man's Calling. Latter portion of Part II, and a portion of Part III. Pp. 526. Edinburgh: James Nichol. London: James Nisbet and Co. Dublin: G. Herbert.

THIS is the second volume of good George Swinnock's admirable treatise on Practical Godliness. If Howe be the John, and Owen the Paul, and Charnock the Peter, Swinnock is the James of the Puritans. In the treatise before us, our author considers how Christians may exercise themselves to godliness in all the walks of life, personal and relative. The great Puritan writers exhausted every subject that they touched: in fact, they did so to a fault, for they left no scope for the imagination to supply any thing. Their fulness, sometimes, amounts to redundancy, and their thoroughness to prosiness. But we vastly prefer them with all their faults, (which are, after all, only defects of style), to the modern school of theological writers and thinkers. George Swinnock in his treatise on Practical Godliness, surveys life in all its aspects, and gives directions for each. We have so recently introduced his first volume to the notice of our readers, that we shall content ourselves with giving an extract as a sample of his pungent style. On the importance of choosing proper companions, he says:—

"They who dwell in Ethiopia, quickly change their skins into a black colour. It is ill and unwholesome for our souls to breathe in an infectious air. Looking-glasses that are very clear and clean, are quickly obscured and dimmed with the foul breath of such as blow upon them. The river Hypanis, famous for the sweetness of its water, by receiving the bitter waters of the fountain Erampes, is poisoned. Joseph learned the court phrase to swear by the life of Pharoah, by his living amongst them whose tongues were tipped with such language. David was brought to feign himself frantic, and to dissemble as if he could have fought against God's favourites, and sheathed his sword in the bowels of his friends, by associating with uncircumcised Achish. If Peter needlessly thrust himself among the High Priest's servants, how soon is he taught, even with a curse and an oath, to deny his Master! Wicked men will be likelier to make thee worse, than thou to make them better. Israel could not bring Egypt to worship the true God, but Egypt brought Israel to offer sacrifice to their false God. It was from them that the Jews sucked that poison which cost both them and their posterity so dear. The Golden Calf was first fashioned in the iron furnace. The tyrant Mezentius tied the living bodies of the captives to the dead; the dead stunk up the living, but the living could not quicken the dead. Those that company much with dogs, may well swarm with fleas. It is difficult, even to a miracle, to keep God's commandments and evil company too." (P. 241-243.)

The remaining volumes shall be duly introduced, as they appear, to our readers.

Dissent Defended: being a reply to a Pamphlet entitled "Nonconformity

Confuted," by a Clergyman of the Archdeaconry of Salop. By JOSEPHUS JUDSON, Wellington, Salop. London: Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster-row.

THE Pamphlet to which this is a reply, was, judging from the extracts given, a contemptible production as to its argumentative power. Still, it was marked by great earnestness and self confidence, and was, therefore, likely to impose upon people with weak heads. Vehement assertion with many passes for argument. So our brother Judson buckled on his armour and produced this reply, which is marked by great gravity, propriety, and good sense; but is rather deficient in vigour. The fundamental principles on which our Dissent rests, are fairly and fully presented. The style is good, and the spirit earnest. No candid reader can doubt that Mr. Judson has the best of the controversy. We hope the next time he rides into the list of polemics, he may have an opponent more worthy of his spear. The times are, indeed, cheering for right-minded men. What changes we have seen in a few months! Household Suffrage the law of the land; Compulsory Church Rates abolished; and the Irish Church doomed by the magnificent majority of 60 in a full House of Commons!! Let Liberation Society men take heart!

"Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops."

Ritualism and its Remedy. A Lecture delivered in Commercial Street, School-room, at the request of Working Men in the East of London, with 13 declarations made by themselves in Public Meeting on the same subject. Pp. 20. London: Elliot Stock. Price One Penny. By Rev. CHARLES STOVEL.

WE are always glad to meet Charles Stovel in print. He is ever interesting, earnest, and thoughtful, and sometimes eloquent. His method of dealing with the themes that he handles is invariably original. He is always himself. The little tract before us is worthy of an extensive circulation, and such, we trust, will be its destiny.

We have received and cordially commend the following Magazines.

Published by Elliot Stock.

The Methodist Quarterly for March, 1868. Price One Shilling.

The Scattered Nation for March and April. Price Fourpence.

The Church for March and April. Price One Penny.

The Hive for March and April. Price One Penny.

Published by W. H. Collingridge.

The Gospel Magazine for March and April. Price Sixpence.

Published by W. Macintosh.

The Watchmen of Ephraim for March. Price One Shilling.

Published by Houlston and Wright.

The Little Gleaner for March. Price One Penny.

Published by S. W. Partridge & Co.

The Christian Times for Friday, March 20th, with an admirable likeness of Thomas Binney. Price One Penny.

Intelligence.

SAXONY.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHURCHES.

I. HALLE.—If the preservation of even one child of God is a great and special deed of the grace of God, much more so is the preservation of a whole church, which consists of a number made up perhaps of many single members; and if even every single follower of Christ has many enemies and dangers, in and around himself, above and below himself, the church, a united number of Christians, has still more and far greater enemies and dangers; sometimes "the gates of hell" threaten to overthrow *her*. If, therefore, a church can write down another year of preservation, this is a great grace of God, and does greatly tend to the honour of Christ, to the

joy of the church, and to the reproach of Satan. But we now have not only the joy to speak of a glorious preservation, but also of a gracious increase. Though we were constrained to exclude some members because of their unchristian walk, and several others were taken by the Lord into the triumphant church above; whilst others again for want of employment emigrated to the West, yet our number has not decreased but increased, by those we have received as converts and baptised. To the honour of the Lord we also must mention that during the whole of the past year we enjoyed perfect peace and sweet fellowship in our midst. All the members, some more, others less, were active in the work of the Lord; especially the Young Men's Society was busy with holding prayer meetings, visiting the sick and enquirers, assisting in the Sunday school and distributing tracts. The Sunday school has continued and prospered, not only in the place of the church, but also on the stations. We only have to regret that Brother Liebig, from Magdeburg, who was a great help to us in that place, left us, having been stationed in Lübeck, a station of the church in Hamburg, so that I am in the whole Saxon territory, with its six millions of inhabitants, the only missionary.

Two of our larger stations, Magdeburg and Altenburg, could now be constituted to special churches, and we then would have four churches in Saxony, but we must still keep them as stations, for we have no pastors nor preachers for them, and it indeed is more scriptural that a church has a plurality of pastors, than that a pastor has a plurality of churches. The present number of members of the church in Halle is about 140.

Whilst we feel that after the lapse of another year we have much reason to praise the Lord for all he has done, we also must confess that we ourselves have not done what we ought to have done; and we now pray the Lord to give us with a new year, also new zeal, new strength and blessings, and grant that we may prove ourselves, as single members and as a church, a salt, a light, and a city on a hill.

II. ODERAN.—Perhaps no church, or only few, have been called by the Lord into existence under such great oppressions and persecutions, as the above-named church in the kingdom of Saxony, and this opposition and oppression have continued even until now. The meetings of the members are prohibited as if they were treasonable conventicles, and the preaching of the Word is still threatened with three years imprisonment; but notwithstanding all that, the members have, even on all their stations, held their regular services, and the writer of this has regularly visited them and preached the gospel to well attended meetings. We of course had patiently to suffer it that repeated times our services were disturbed and dissolved by the police, that I had to follow the policemen to their courts and was directed out of one town and out of the other. The Lord Jesus, however, manifestly has not been on the side of our adversaries but with us, for though we are almost as nothing in comparison to the State and State-church power that raged against us, we have had the victory. All our members have proved faithful, neither persecution, nor sin, world or devil, could take from us one; others have been converted and added to our number, and the ordinances of Christ Jesus have been administered. It even seems that now our enemies are getting tired of fighting against us, and though they do not say they would grant us some liberty, yet often they act as if they did not know of our movements, and we act as if we did not know of them. I could hold various well attended meetings of late undisturbed, and the people were really anxious to hear the word, they would listen if I preached from evening till after midnight. I, therefore, after the preaching service hold a Bible-class with familiar intercourse and interrogations. In Zwickau, where I had been banished last autumn, I was again there a few weeks ago, held a Bible-class, and administered both ordinances. Here I was singularly reminded of the words, "Am not I thine ass?" for the candidate for baptism was a lame woman,

and I had, during the midnight hours, to carry her to the water out of the town on my back, some brethren who were with me assisted in turn.

How needful it is to preach the gospel in Saxony, you may judge from such facts as this, in Meerane where I held several meetings, and which is a town of nearly twenty thousand souls, who all, with the exception of the few Baptists are Lutherans, there is only one church (place of worship) with two clergymen, and even this one church is seldom half filled on Sundays.

There are here, as in various other places, a number of enquirers and souls who give us good hope of their final and full decision for Jesus Christ. I have, with the Lord's help, travelled to and fro, have preached and held Bible-classes, have distributed and sent abroad Bibles, tracts and various Christian literature for the benefit of immortal souls, but if only we understood it, not merely to do that, but also to *travail* for the spiritual birth of men. However, we will look to Jesus for the future and every blessing, think of his great promises concerning his kingdom, "give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word," and expect that in another year we shall have other and still greater victories, which we will celebrate to the honour of Christ, the Lord, whose is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever! Amen.

MORITZ GEISSLER.

Halle, April, 1868.

[Many of our readers will be glad to learn that Mr. Geissler is expected in this country this month. We trust that his visit will be very pleasant to himself, and the means of greatly increasing the interest of the churches in the important work which he represents. ED.

MISSION TO FRANCE.

JOURNAL OF MR. CRETIN.

Welcomes and Labours. Denain, March 23rd.—I came to Bruay, where I had meetings of from twenty to forty persons only, because it was rainy. There is a work to be done there, but a labourer is needed to exercise a constant influence. The day following I past through Noeux, where their are some families disposed to listen to the gospel. I then came to Bully Grenay, the residence of Mr. F——, formerly in the service of the Union; he still labours to some extent. He promises to endeavour to do good to the families around him, and who listen to him. I have seen several who hear me with attention and pleasure. Then I came to Vermelle, to a miner, who collected his friends together, and I had a good meeting. They invited me to come again, and to visit Madame R—— at La Bassee, a member of our church. The next day I came to Sens, to a brother who is a miner. He had not seen a Baptist pastor for years. Here I met several friends who heard me with joy, and invited me to come and see them again. If I had time, I might make many visits in Pas de Calais. The miners of Bruay assess themselves to pay our travelling expenses.

Preaching to the Rulers. April 10th.—The Board of Benevolence of Valenciennes refused us admission into the Hotel Dieu, where we formerly visited the sick. I went with Mr. Vincent to the Board, and was well received. But difficulties were proposed; it was pretended that the national pastor said that we had no right, and that he alone ought to have admission to the hospice. The Board seemed to comprehend our claims; but though he was informed of them, he still refused. We exchanged several letters, and I was called before the Board, where I had a serious struggle with the president, who appeared so much the more displeased that I had refuted his accusations. The Board, having conferred together, lowered their tone, demanding only a certificate from the mayor of Denain. I told them that I would bring them a certificate out of courtesy, though I maintained that it was unnecessary. I returned eight days afterwards, and took occasion to offer to all the members of the Board my own tracts and those of the Revival Society. The president was as genial as could be conceived; he made a speech showing that he knew how to distinguish rationalists from Protestant believers.

He accepted our tracts, and only a single member refused them. The president remarked that I was playing the propagandist among them, and advised his friend to accept the tracts. I defended in their presence the right of propagandism. We were then admitted into the hospice to visit our sick friends. God dissipated their prejudices, and through our adversaries gave us an opportunity to proclaim the true evangelical doctrine to the magistrates of Valenciennes.

Baptists — Encomiums. On the 21st, the passover-day, our meetings at Anzin were small. We were to have several baptisms, but many of our candidates were sick; others did not arrive. We had but a single person to baptise, a widow of Preseau, who was converted a long time ago. She has two children, and one hand is disabled, and as she was in debt to her brewer, she did not dare to close her shop. But her conscience spoke strongly and she feared the displeasure of God. Hence she concluded to walk by faith, and closed her shop, notwithstanding the opposition of her creditor and her enemies, who called her foolish. To hear them, one would think she must die of famine. We had the pleasure of preaching the gospel in this house, formerly the dwelling place of Satan. The church received Mrs. J——, and she was baptised. She was so happy in being able to confess her Saviour! The next day we went to hold a meeting at Preseau. At night the old shop was full of people, who listened with attention. An intoxicated man only interrupted me, expressing his admiration of my words. He said aloud "We never heard our priests speak so well. This man," he said, "has come straight down from heaven, to speak to us so well." The daughter of Mrs. D—— I think has given her heart to Jesus. They have persecuted her in vain. She remains steadfast and reads her New Testament and has put her novels aside.

28th.—I was called to officiate at the funeral of a child at Valenciennes. The day was rainy and few were present. I distributed fifty tracts at the cemetery.

May 4th.—I was called to attend the funeral of Mrs. B——, at Trette. The national pastor of Valenciennes had been invited to preside. This lady, whom I had long visited, died in faith, awaiting her departure with joy. She had given direction that I should participate in the exercises at her burial. The national pastor conducted the services at the house, and I at the cemetery, where there were present three or four hundred persons, who listened with the greatest attention. We also distributed from two to three hundred tracts. One man, after hearing me, said, "I would not have failed of being at the funeral for twenty sous." The nationalists themselves expressed their gratitude to me for the words which I spoke at the grave.

In May I hired a house to hold meetings in. It is better situated, but too small. We have taken it, however, until we are able to build another.

Dialogue with a Curate. I have continued to hold meetings at Orchies, where we have ordinarily thirty hearers. I ought to be able to go there oftener: several are anticipating baptism. Much good might be done in the vicinity, if the people could be visited.

The new curate of Denain manifests much opposition to Protestants. He visits our most ignorant brethren for the purpose of shaking their faith. He has burned some of my tracts. He has made a personal attack on one of our sisters, telling her that he would bring her back to the Catholic faith. Recently he met her in the street, and gave her his hand, and said that he meant to visit her shortly, to enlighten her. I was at her house, when she exclaimed, "There is the curate; he is coming to see me." She invited him to come in and take a seat; but seeing me, he did not care to accept the invitation. After a few words of no consequence, he said to Mrs. L——, "You must come back within the pale of the Romish church; you are an apostate." I approached him and asked him "What is an apostate?" In a rude tone he replied, "I shall not speak to you." "Well," I replied, "shall I tell *you* what an apostate is?" "I do not wish to speak to you." "You have attacked Mrs. L——; perhaps I in turn may attack you." As I was approaching him, he called out, "Do not touch me. I do not wish to speak to you." "I am not the plague. You will not speak to me because you are convinced that you

are in error, and that you cannot justify yourself before those who are able to judge of your faith." People were gathering around to listen to us, and he hastily took his departure.

He boasted that he had burned my tracts, and that while I politely saluted *him*, he never saluted *me*. I was going to visit among the *corons** of Orleans. When I discovered him on the road behind me, I slackened my pace, to see what he would do on coming up with me. He looked the other way, so as not to salute me. He followed the road, and I took the right hand street. But I noticed that directly he stopped, and again came on behind me. A second time I slackened my pace, till at length there was only the width of the street between us. I said to him, "It is unpleasant weather, Mr. Curate." He gave me no answer. A moment afterwards he said to me, "Are you going to keep the passover, confessing and receiving the sacrament?" I replied, "My passover is already accomplished. Jesus Christ is our passover, and through faith in him, we are *passed* from death unto life. We live under grace, and are free from the bondage of Satan. We live by Jesus Christ, who purges us daily and causes us to live in the liberty of the sons of God. Don't you believe in Jesus Christ, Mr. Curate?" He was a long time without answering. Then he said to me, as he had done before, "You must be converted." "To whom, Mr. Curate?" "To God." "I was converted to God a long time ago. Do you pretend that I ought to be converted to you,—to you a poor sinner, who must appear with me before the Judge, guilty, and one of the chief of sinners, because you conceal the truth from men, and instead of sending them to God, dare to stand in his place, teaching them to kneel at your feet?" He kept silence. I went on to say, "You have reported that the minister from Lille had confessed." "That is not true." "If it was not he, it was somebody else. I can show it to you in your own journals." "You said it was the minister of Lille, and that is false." "You told Mrs. D—— that I had declared to you that a person ought not to change his religion; that the Catholic religion is good. That is another falsehood, for you know very well that you would never talk with me. You are a liar, therefore, and you belong to the father of lies." We had now reached the *corons*, and he was very glad to get rid of my company. He did not answer me a word.

* *Corons* is the name of the miners' huts. Orleans is the name of that part of the town of Douain where the *corons* are situated.

On the 29th of May, I came to Bruay, where I had good meetings. There are many wretched people here, but the regular work has been given up. There is a great demand for our labours.

FARSLEY, NEAR LEEDS.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE OF A NEW BAPTIST CHAPEL.—In consequence of the regular and constant accessions made to the church and congregation assembling for Divine worship in the Baptist chapel, Farsley, under the pastorate of the Rev. E. Parker, the need of increased accommodation has for three years past been increasingly felt. In the summer and autumn of 1865 steps were taken to ascertain the opinions of all concerned in the matter as to the best course to pursue. A very large majority were decidedly in favour of building an entirely new chapel. It was thought prudent, however, to secure, in payments or reliable promises, half the estimated outlay before building operations were commenced, and a period of two years was allowed for that purpose. That period has elapsed, and about £2,000 have been secured. The friends have, therefore, felt encouraged to proceed. The foundation stone was laid on Tuesday, April the 14th, by John Smith, Esq., of Bradford, who kindly presented a cheque for £100. A mallet and silver trowel were presented to him by Mr. Jonathan Marshall. A bottle, containing the names of the pastor, deacons, and building committee, *The Leeds Mercury*, *The Freeman*, and the *Primitive Church Magazine*, was deposited in the stone. Hymns printed for the occasion were sung at suitable intervals. Prayers were offered by Revs. E. Parker and J. Bloomfield. The Rev. H. Dowson, of Bury College, delivered an exceedingly appropriate address. After the ceremony, about 1,100 persons partook of an excellent tea, provided in a large room, belonging to Messrs. R. Gaunt & Son. In the evening a meeting was held in the present chapel, over which Alfred Illingworth, Esq., of Bradford, presided. Truly excellent speeches were

delivered by Revs. S. G. Green, B.A., president of Rawden College, J. Makepeace, J. Bloomfield, and J. S. Anderson, of Bradford, and J. Atkinson, of Pudsey. The new chapel will be much nearer the village than the present one. It is intended to be ninety feet by fifty-four feet, inside measurement, and forty feet from the floor to the crown of the segmental ceiling. The walls are to be built of Horsforth stone lined with brick. The building will be in the Italian style with a bold stone cornice and rusticated coigns at the angles, and moulded dressings to the whole of the windows. The principal entrance will be a portico with rectangular rusticated piers, surmounted by an entablature and ornamental vases. The chapel is to seat 1,100 persons including children; the total cost, including fencing, lighting, and warming, will be £3,500. It is intended, when the new building is completed, to use the present chapel for schools.

GEORGETOWN, NEAR TREDEGAR, SOUTH WALES.

A NEW ENGLISH BAPTIST CHAPEL.—We are pleased to observe that a New English Baptist Chapel has been commenced in Georgetown, near Tredegar. The first, or foundation stone was laid on Wednesday, the 11th of March, and it is expected that the building will be proceeded with as briskly as possible, now that the weather seems to have broken up. The contract has been given to our energetic townsman Mr. Edward Morgan, Builder, &c., Park Row, Tredegar. The site is, we believe, one of the most beautiful in the neighbourhood, being near the new police station, and facing Tredegar. A lease of the land has been kindly promised by A. Darby, Esq., Managing Director to the Ebwvoll Company. We wish the promoters every success, especially as they are only a small band of working men who have taken this great work upon themselves. And at the same time it is a very necessary work as it will provide chapel accommodation for a place hitherto totally unprovided for in this respect. There is a population of nearly 3000 persons at present living in Georgetown without a single Sabbath school or place of worship of any kind, except some cottage meetings. We therefore hope the promoters will meet with the sympathy and assistance they deserve, not only from the inhabitants of Georgetown, but from every section of the Christian church, and that much good may result from their labour of love, the blessings of which may only be fully brought to light in that better world to which Christians of every age have endeavoured to point those by whom they have been surrounded.

BAPTISMS.

OGDEN.—On Lord's Day, January 5th, two; by Rev. L. Nuttall.

HASLINGDEN, PLEASANT STREET.—January 26th, one; March 29th, five; by Mr. Prout.

LITTLE LEIGH.—Three disciples were baptised on a profession of their faith, in the Baptist chapel, on the 31st of March, 1868; by A. Spencer, pastor of the Church. One of the above three, is 80 years of age.

COLOMBO, CEYLON.—Four persons were baptised on December 26th, by Mr. Silva; two of whom have joined the English Strict Church, and the other two being Singalese, have joined Mr. Silva's native Singalese Church. One who joined the English Church, was the son of the late deacon of the Pettah Open Communion Baptist Church.

MARRIAGES.

HAWORTH—KENYON.—March 10th, at the Baptist Chapel, Blackburn road, Accrington; by the Rev. P. Prout, of Haslingden, Mr. John Haworth, to Miss Mary Ann Kenyon, both of Accrington.

TAYLOR—HAWORTH.—March 18th, at the Baptist Chapel, Pleasant Street, Haslingden; by the Rev. P. Prout, Mr. John Taylor, to Miss Ellen Haworth, both of Haslingden.

DEATH.

AT Colombo, Ceylon, on 25th November, 1867, Mrs. A. H. Malleappah,

wife of Mr. F. Malleappah, senior. She was born on 4th March, 1804, was baptised by the Rev. E. Daniel, in the Pettah Baptist Chapel, on 17th February, 1844, and was a member in that church, till the year 1858; when together with her husband she left, as they could not conscientiously sit at the Lord's table with the unbaptised. Although deprived of this means of grace, still she was a consistent follower of Jesus, and possessed very many Christian virtues, in an eminent degree, till the very day of her death. She was added as a member of the newly formed Strict Church, in Grandpass, on 20th September, 1867, as she could not have joined at the commencement, being then on her bed with a chronic disease, of which she ultimately died. When informed by her husband that a Church was formed on the Strict Communion principle, she felt much cheered in seeing (as she said), her prayers answered; after which she recovered partially for a few months, and joined the church of her desire on earth for two months; and without a sigh, groan, or struggle, her spirit left the abode of clay, to enter the eternal mansion. She has left abundant proof to conclude that in her case "sudden death was sudden glory." Her remains were buried in the Baptist cemetery, at Catanchina; the service was performed by her pastor, Rev. James Silva, of Grandpass; before a large gathering. This is the first death in the newly formed church.

RECEIVED FOR THE BAPTIST TRACT SOCIETY.

By the TREASURER.	£	s.	d.
T. H. Harris, Esq., London ....S.	1	0	0
Mrs. Risdon, Pershore	0	10	0
Mr. Jenkins, Maesycwmmur	0	3	0
By Mr. WHITEHEAD.			
Collection by Rev. C. Morgan, at Jarrow-on-Tyne	0	10	0
Rev. S. T. Williams, Chatteris....S.	0	5	0
Miss H. King, Kingstanley ....S.	1	0	0
Rev. D. Wassell, Bath ....S.	0	10	0
Mr. C. T. Kingsley, Fairford....S.	0	5	0
Rev. C. Kirtland, London....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Jonas Mitchell, Rawdon ....S.	0	7	6
John Foster, Esq., Farsley ....S.	0	5	0

	£	s.	d.
J. S. Thomas, Esq., Exmouth....S.	1	0	0
Friends at Melksham	0	5	0
Friends at Cirencester....	0	5	0
Ramsgate.			
Miss Gold ....S.	1	1	0
Mrs. Hurst....S.	0	10	0
Tottlebank.			
Mrs. Jackson....S.	2	0	0
John Fell, Esq....S.	1	0	0
Friend....	0	2	0
Corsham.			
Mr. Henry Spackman....S.	0	5	0
Mr. D. H. Marler....S.	0	5	0
Friends ....S.	0	4	0
Stroud.			
Opie Rodway, Esq. ....S.	1	0	0
W. Bishop, Esq....S.	0	5	0
L. W. Winterbotham Esq....S.	0	5	0
E. W. Winterbotham, Esq....S.	0	5	0
J. Orchard, Esq. ....S.	0	5	0
Mr. F. J. Bird ....S.	0	5	0
Mr. A. Mutlow ....S.	0	5	0
Mrs. W. Webb ....S.	0	5	0
Miss Chitterbuck....S.	0	5	0
Four Friends, 2/6 each	0	10	0
Nailsworth.			
Mr. B. Flint ....S.	0	5	0
Mr. J. Roberts ....S.	0	5	0
Mrs. W. B. Norton ....S.	0	5	0
Miss C. H. Flint ....S.	0	5	0
Rev. T. Newman and Friends	0	12	0
Swindon.			
W. B. Wearing, Esq. ....S.	0	10	0
Mr. William Greenaway....S.	0	5	0
Mr. William Barnes....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Thomas Barrett ....S.	0	5	0
Mr. George Deacon ....S.	0	5	0
Mrs. Keylock....S.	0	5	0
Friends	0	7	6
Calne.			
Rev. W. H. J. Page....S.	0	5	0
Messrs. Wilkins and Son ....S.	0	5	0
Mr. J. Perry ....S.	0	5	0
Mr. John Chappell ....S.	0	5	0
Mr. Thomas Harris....D.	0	5	0
Friend....	0	2	0
Chippenham.			
E. Brinkworth, Esq....S.	0	7	6
J. H. Brinkworth, Esq....S.	0	5	0
Mr. James Long ....S.	0	5	0
Mr. E. J. Ashe ....S.	0	5	0
Rev. J. Bergin ....S.	0	5	0
Mr. George Brinkworth....S.	0	5	0
Several Friends....	0	12	0